

Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to force their stations to air an anti-Kerry documentary days before the election is a clear example of the dangers of media consolidation.

Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. But when large companies control the airwaves, we get more of what's good for the bottom line and less of what we need for our democracy. Instead of something produced at "News Central" far away, it's more important that we see real people from our own communities and more substantive news about issues that matter.

Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard.

Sinclair's decision to abuse their considerable power in this manner will, I am certain have many consequences. Hamilton and the Federalists tried to abuse their power in efforts to abuse the press early in our country's history. The result was not the self-serving one intended. It created a backlash that only strengthened the resolve of The People to strengthen a freely functioning press. Sinclair's abuse of power is a threat to democracy and to the free press. Their actions are like those of a bully and are shameful. YOU are the guardians of a free press. YOU have a crucial responsibility to prevent this abuse of public airways. Please muster the courage to rise to this honorable task.

Thank you.

Linda Pelon